

(Washington, DC) - Congressman Wally Herger today issued the following statement in response to the congressional testimony of [General David Petraeus](#) (see [charts](#) ) and [Ambassador Ryan Crocker](#) concerning the situation in Iraq:

“I’m encouraged by the transformation we’ve seen in Iraq over the past several months. General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker spoke of clear progress in securing cities once considered strongholds of al Qaeda and other extremists, building up effective Iraqi Security Forces, and fostering peace and reconciliation among the Iraqi people. Iraq is experiencing the combination of security improvements and political progress that is essential to achieving long-term stability. The men and women of our armed forces who have served at any point in this mission deserve our nation’s admiration and gratitude.

“General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker also made it clear that progress in Iraq is tenuous and reversible. Al Qaeda is weaker but still lethal and determined to establish a terrorist sanctuary in the heart of the Middle East. As recently demonstrated, Shiite extremist Muqtada al Sadr and his militia pose a serious threat to Iraq’s future stability and security. Further, General Petraeus again warned that agents of Iran are providing weapons and training to groups working to undercut security gains in Iraq. Iran’s destabilizing influence must continue to be addressed.

“As General Petraeus stated, it is in our national security interests to help Iraq defeat al Qaeda and Iranian influences. For this reason, I support the General’s recommendation to assess the security situation in Iraq before moving forward with additional troop reductions after the ‘surge’ troops return home this summer. It would be irresponsible and counter productive for Congress to micromanage our commanders on the ground just as hope for a stable Iraq is on the rise. General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker have proven capable of leading our nation’s efforts to improve the situation in Iraq. Washington must not undermine their successful strategy at this time of increased optimism.”